GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:71
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2007
CONFERENCE OF MINORITIES COMMISSION OF STATES
Vallabbhaneni Shri Balashowry

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether any Conference of Minorities Commission of the States has taken place in the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and details of the recommendations made in the Conference; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (A. R. ANTULAY)

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 71 for answer on 16 August, 2007

(a) & (b) The National Commission for Minorities convened the 5th Annual Conference of State Minorities Commissions at New Delhi on 2nd November, 2006. Amongst the issues discussed in the Conference were the following:

(i) Minorities should feel safe and get a fair and reasonable share of development. The benefits of various Government schemes should flow equitably to the minorities and a certain proportion of development projects should be located in minority concentration districts.
(ii) Communal peace and harmony should be maintained.
(iii) Special tribunals should be set up to deal with communal offences.
(iv) The victims of communal carnage should be given adequate financial support for rehabilitation.
(v) Minorities should get a fair share in Central and State Government jobs. The minority youth should be provided with skills to get their legitimate share in employment, both in the public and private sectors.
(vi) The main factor responsible for the socio-economic backwardness of the minority communities, particularly the Muslim community, is the lack of access to the common school system. This is particularly true in the case of Muslim girls. Therefore, concrete schemes for setting up secondary and higher secondary schools in the blocks and districts having a predominantly Muslim population, should be implemented for Muslim girls. Widening of access to professional and technical education should be a priority area in educational programmes.
(vii) Government should monitor implementation of the Prime Minister`s New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities.
(viii) The scholarship schemes funded by the Maulana Azad Education Foundation should be enlarged to cover the post-matric level also.
(ix) The Wakf Board properties should be utilized to open educational institutions.
(x) The status of the National Commission for Minorities should be raised to a constitutional body.

(c) The Prime Minister`s New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, announced in June, 2006, addresses many of these concerns. It has significant socio-economic content and it focuses on enhancing opportunities for education, equitable share in economic activities and employment and improving the conditions of living of minorities.

The New 15-Point Programme provides for earmarking of 15% of targets and outlays for minorities, wherever possible, in the schemes included in the Programme, Targets for 2007- 2008 have been approved and communicated to the Ministries / Departments concerned for appropriate action.

The implementation of the 15 Point Programme is monitored by the Committee of Secretaries (COS), which reviews the progress of the programme in respect of monitorable targets, once every six months and reports the status to the Cabinet. Detailed guidelines have been sent to the State Governments/ UT Administrations, including constitution of State and District Level Committees for monitoring the implementation of the programme. Several States have already constituted such Committees.

The New 15-Point Programme provides for special consideration to minorities in recruitment to government jobs. Department of Personnel & Training has already issued guidelines to improve the representation of minority communities in government jobs.

The educational backwardness of the Muslim community is sought to be addressed through a multi-pronged strategy. Government has already launched a merit-cum-means scholarship scheme and a Free Coaching and Allied Scheme. The corpus fund of the

Maulana Azad Education Foundation has been enhanced from Rs.100 to Rs.200 crores so as to enable it to enlarge its activities.